THE WRITINGS

BOOK III

On Worship

I. PRAYER

They say that many people open their mouth towards the Gods, but their souls are full of earthly desires. These people pray to the Gods for things that are not worthy of them, considering them as servants to men. Do mortals not realize that they only turn to the temples of the Gods when some evil happens to them and that their prayers are filled with words most unworthy of the Gods? Indeed, prayer is the sin that corrupts the purest offerings of the faithful. Yet, what is prayer to the Alethean but the elevation of the soul towards the God? Just as the rope leads the climber up the rocks, not the rocks on the rope, so does prayer elevate the mind into the divine glow. Therefore, how should we pray to the Gods? With pure hands and pure hearts shall we address the Gods, and shall we open our minds to the LOGOS. We must not approach the Gods as merchants do to each other but neither should we present our needs to them as if they were our equals. We must remember that we recognize the order established by the Gods and that we are their unworthy servants.

When praying to Apollo in the first book of the *Iliad*, Chryses did not speak like an insane man, asking the God for vengeance or gifts. He invoked his lordship over Chryse and holy Cilla and Tenedos, reminding him of the offerings of his past devotion as the custom required when addressing the Gods above:

> *“Hear me, Lord of the silver bow, who guards Chryse and holy Cilla, and rules over Tenedos with might. If ever I roofed a pleasing temple for you, or if ever I burned to you fat thigh-pieces of bulls or goats, fulfill for me this prayer.”*

Notice how our priest prays to the God. He reminds Apollo of the lawfully earned honors and the offerings to him, made with pure hands, of the temples built by him, and of the rites performed in his holy place. He obeys the order established by the Gods and does not chatter about his inventions. Chryses invokes Apollo to fulfill his prayer because it is the truth that should be addressed to the Gods, for the words of order are what the faithful should speak when invoking the Gods above.

Moreover, prayer is not only the act performed in times of trouble when the soul is in distress and needs the help of the Gods. It is the breath of our existence in the True Way. Homer sings of it when Pisistratus lifts the cup above the altar of Athena in the *Odyssey* (3.55-61):

> *“Pray now, stranger, to Lord Poseidon, for it is his feast that you have met in coming here… pour your libation and pray, as is proper, for I think that you too pray to the deathless Gods, since all men have need of the Gods.”*

See how the poet phrases it. He does not say that only the unfortunate ones pray to the Gods, but he says that all mortals have need of them since in their littleness, they are always at risk of diverging from the order established by the Gods. Thus, when the Alethean prays as he should, he turns his back to the sun when invoking the heavenly Gods and turns his back to the depths when calling the Gods of the sea and the underworld. He praises the order and speaks of the glory of the immortals when invoking them, calling upon their power to guide his own soul.

II. SACRIFICES

Do you think that the Gods, who command all things and are omnipotent, need the sacrifices of men? How unworthy are those who consider pious acts nothing but bribes for the Gods. What could the almighty need, and what could the all-powerful desire for? Sacrifices are most certainly not made to satisfy the needs of the immortals since they have no desires. The reason why the Divine Law prescribes that we offer gifts to the Gods is none other but the sanctity of sacrifice itself. The sacrifice is an acknowledgment of the superior power of the Gods. This is a divine act for it is by obeying the order established by the Gods that we offer sacrifices to them. By this, we show our gratitude to the Creator for bringing us into this world and for giving us life and, by performing sacrifices, we become united with the divine order.

What offerings do the Gods demand from us, according to Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 336-341)?

> *"According to your power offer sacrifice to the deathless Gods purely and cleanly, and burn choice thighs to them; at other times propitiate them with libations and incense, both when you go to bed and when the holy light comes, so that they may have a gracious heart toward you."*

Notice how the poet puts it. He does not call upon the wealthy to bring hundreds of oxen and hundreds of sheep to the altars of the Gods. He knows that the Gods do not need them since they are omnipotent, but he knows that the Law does not demand riches offered to the Gods but the honesty of the heart. A simple cup of water and some incense would greatly please the Creator rather than hundreds of hecatombs that selfish men offer to the Gods of death. The Alethean knows that when he offers to the Gods the animal sacrifices and gifts the Law prescribes from him, he must obey the order established by the LOGOS. The divine poet narrates in the *Iliad* about the Danaans and Trojans who prayed to the Gods above and then sacrificed to them as the Gods command that we do when we offer gifts of flesh (*Iliad* 1.458-466):

> *"When they had prayed and sprinkled the barley meal, they first drew back the victims' heads, cut their throats, and flayed them. They cut out the thigh-bones, covered them with fat in two layers, and placed raw pieces of meat upon them. Then the old man burned them upon split wood and poured libations of sparkling wine…"*

Why must we observe all these rites when we sacrifice to the Gods? It is by observing the order in all things that we can prove our faith to the Lord. All the sanctity of the sacrifice is in the fact that we bring it according to the divine will, for all the actions performed from washing the hands to throwing the barley meal signify our

gratitude towards the Creator for making us live. Therefore, we must not transgress the order prescribed by the Gods in the rites of sacrifice lest we fall into the traps of impious humanity.

III. PURIFICATION

What is man, dirty as he is, to approach the almightiness of the Gods? If you, unworthy mortal, had the audacity to appear before the judge in dirty clothes, what would be his verdict against you? If you dare to appear before the immortal Gods, unclean in body and soul, what will these ever-watchful Gods do to you? Many people observe the rites that make them ritually unclean only in jest, thinking that no one sees the dirt that comes from their evil hearts. But know that the Gods are not deceived by hypocrisy and that they do not suffer mockery.

Before anything else, we must purify our bodies before making sacrifices to the Gods. It does not mean, however, that the Law prescribes for us to purify ourselves only to appear clean before our fellow men. Hesiod warns us against approaching the altars of the Gods with unwashed hands (*Works and Days*, 724-726):

> *"Never pour libations of sparkling wine to Zeus at dawn with unwashed hands, nor to the other immortals; for then they do not hear your prayers, but spit them back."*

Why does the Divine Poet warn us against approaching the Gods in an impure manner? It is because dishonoring them is the ultimate blasphemy. You show the Gods your mockery by approaching them in dirty clothes and by spitting on their altar, for you consider them equal to yourself and their laws are no different from what the earthly judges prescribe.

Washing our bodies with running water symbolizes the purification of the soul from the filth of evil deeds. It does not mean, however, that washing ourselves makes us clean as it only removes the dirt of the body. When the pestilence devastated the Danaan camp, the commander in chief ordered everyone to purify themselves to offer large hecatombs to Apollo (*Iliad* 1.313-314):

> *"And the son of Atreus bade the people purify themselves; and they purified themselves, and cast the filth away into the sea, and offered to Apollo whole hecatombs."*

First of all, everything that could harm men had to be removed so that nothing impure might defile the altar of the Gods. Notice how the poet describes the removal of impurities from the camp: it was not done in a ceremonious manner so that neither men nor dogs might defile themselves, but all the nastiness was thrown away into the sea. Similarly, the purification from sins is complete only when all vices and impure desires are removed from the soul. Therefore, the water in which we wash ourselves only removes the dirt of the body, whereas the truth, the light, and obedience to the Divine Law are needed to purify the soul. Thus, the Alethean knows that before he turns to the Gods or performs any pious act, he must purify his body and soul so that no uncleanness might hinder the Gods from hearing his prayers.

IV. PIETY

What is piety? Is it blind devotion to things sacred without understanding them? Is it not a conceited invention of men who have decided to interpret the Gods according to their whims? Look around you, and see these “priests” who have turned faith into something contemptible, who made toys of what was sacred. They are impious because they deny the Truth revealed by the Muses and do not acknowledge the order prescribed by the LOGOS. Piety is a virtue by which we understand the divine order and recognize that the Gods are good, almighty, unchangeable, and just and that we must worship them piously and live righteously.

It is a virtue that dictates our minds and teaches us to recognize the power of the Gods. In other words, piety is the awareness of the divine order. Therefore, piety makes us understand that no man can be happy if he denies the power of the Gods. Moreover, piety dictates that we live honestly and righteously with other men: We must be respectful towards our parents, hospitable towards strangers, and true to our word. A man who commits crimes against other men is an ungodly sinner because he violates the laws of Zeus himself. Hesiod recounts the lawlessness of the Silver Race (*Works and Days*, 134-137):

> *“They could not refrain from rash folly toward one another, nor would they serve the immortals nor sacrifice on the holy altars of the blessed ones, as is right for men in their customs.”*

The Silver Race was doomed to destruction because its members did not honor the Gods and denied the divine order. Hesiod announces the same truth in the *Works and Days* (217-218):

> *“Justice triumphs over violence when she comes to the end of the race; but the fool learns only through suffering.”*

Piety presupposes awareness of the order from which all things originate. An impious man is ignorant of the divine laws or openly violates them; therefore, such men are unworthy to live among men and be called mortals.

V. CONVERSION

Why do you turn, fickle-minded one, and why do you seek false opinions, drowning your soul in new heresies? Have you not realized that the voice of men is the sound of delusions and that all inventions of men lead to ruin? Men have built their own towers and made themselves gods, but it is not for them to decide what is right and what is wrong. Conversion is the turning of the soul from the delusions of men to the True Faith. It is the abandonment of all human ideas and the acceptance of divine wisdom, for every heart that turns away from humanity turns to the Gods. Conversion begins when the soul hears the voice of the LOGOS: No man can follow the True Faith on his own, but every believer turns to the Muses and the Divine Fathers.

This turning of the soul is described in the *Theogony* when the poet dreams that the Muses, daughters of Zeus, appeared to him on Helicon (*Theogony* 26-28):

> *“Ploughmen of the field, wretched reproaches, mere bellies. We know how to speak many false things as if they were true, but we know also, when we will, how to utter truth.”*

Say what you want about the lies of the Muses, but their truth is what the ploughmen have overheard. Conversion presupposes that the soul realizes that it is unclean and that it must turn away from the dirt of humanity and put on the garment of the divine order. It means that the believer must renounce all the inventions of men and accept the Truth delivered by the inspired Fathers. The Alethean knows that he has turned to the Light only when he has realized the voice of the LOGOS and confessed his faith before the Divine Fathers. Thus the inspired poet recounts the promises of the Muses in the hymn to the Muses and to Apollo (*Hymn* 25.1-5):

> *“From the Muses and far-shooting Apollo come bards and musicians upon earth… Happy is he whom the Muses love; sweet flows the speech from his lips.”*

Conversion presupposes obedience to the Divine Fathers and turning away from humanity to the Gods and puts the soul into the divine order, for it is made pure from the dirt of mankind.

VI. THE ALETHEAN LIFE

Having turned to the LOGOS and accepted the Truth, the Alethean now turns to the Living Gods and asks himself, What now? How should I live according to the Law? Should I turn to my old and sinful life as if my conversion had been in vain? Perish such an Alethean, for his faith has indeed profited him nothing if he continues to live as before. Every word that comes from the mouth of an unrighteous man is an affront to the altar of the Gods. Therefore the Alethean must live piously and righteously and obey all the laws prescribed by the Gods. To follow the True Faith is to be ever-watchful and to live for the beauty and order of the divine creation. The road to salvation is narrow, and the one who walks it must walk it constantly if he does not wish to fall asleep in the harbor of tranquility. Hesiod sings of the narrow road in the *Works and Days* (287-292):

> *“Badness can be got easily and in abundance; smooth is the road and very near it dwells. But in front of virtue the deathless Gods have set sweat; long and steep is the path to it and rough at first; but when one reaches the top, then it becomes easy, hard though it was before.”*

The Alethean does not anticipate an easy life free from hardship, but rather understands that every challenge faced in a spirit of virtue makes the soul more harmonious, bringing it closer to the divine realm.

In practice, this divine truth manifests through the believer’s unwavering honesty in communication, integrity in commercial affairs, loyalty in friendships, and adherence to justice in all interactions. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (707-711) offers wisdom on ethical living:

> *“Do not make a friend equal to a brother… and do not lie for the sake of tongue-pleasing.”*

Truthfulness should be the cornerstone of an Alethean’s utterances, guiding every aspect of their existence. Moreover, the follower of Alethea dedicates time each day to pious rituals, offering prayers and libations to the Gods upon awaking and before sleeping, partaking in sacred festivals, studying the LOGOS, and engaging with the interpretations of the Hellenic Fathers. By living this way, the Alethean serves as a living testament, a beacon of hope for a lost and misguided world that there does exist a path back to the divine, that the Gods are real and that they do indeed care for the fate of mankind.